



THE SENATE
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Birkholz, Allen Sponsor Legislation to Fund Great Lakes Protection Programs

Water decals would raise funding to meet the challenges facing the Great Lakes

LANSING – Senator Patricia Birkholz, R-Saugatuck Township, and Senator Jason Allen, R-Traverse City, will introduce two bills next week aimed at providing new funding options for Great Lakes protection programs and the state’s quest to eliminate aquatic nuisance species.

“Protecting the Great Lakes is critical to the future of Michigan,” Allen said. “Thousands of families live, work and play on the shores of the Great Lakes every year. We must take action to protect the lakes today.”

The bills would create a new watercraft decal, which can be purchased in addition to the current required watercraft registration. Boaters would be able to purchase the decal for \$35, \$25 of which goes directly into the Great Lakes Protection Fund. The Secretary of State would keep the additional \$10 to administer the program.

“The watercraft decal is based on the same principles of the specialty license plates,” Birkholz said. “If Michigan boaters want to purchase a decal to show their pride in our waters, while contributing funds to protecting programs, Michigan will be more prepared to resolve the challenges facing the Great Lakes.”

The Great Lakes Protection Fund will be used to eradicate aquatic nuisance species in the Great Lakes and other waters of the state. A portion of the fund may also be used for public education on the threat of these aquatic nuisance species as well.

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“Exotic species create a substantial negative environmental impact on the Great Lakes, which impacts everything from fishing to water quality,” Allen said.

The legislation will be read into the Michigan State Senate on Tuesday, June 3. The bills are expected to be sent to the Senate Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Committee for consideration.